

ON THE OXFORD CIRCUIT
BY MR JUSTICE DARLING



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LOS ANGELES

ON THE OXFORD CIRCUIT

ON THE OXFORD CIRCUIT

AND OTHER VERSES

BY THE
HON. MR. JUSTICE DARLING

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
AUSTIN O. SPARE



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ON THE OXFORD CIRCUIT



WHY is the sad county town, prim,
staidest of old market-places,
Roused from its lethargy thus
by these peals, this insistent
carillon;
'Jeanette et Jeanot' at the hour,
and at intervals banging bob-majors?
Why flutter flags from the tower of the gaol and
the keep of the castle,
Bright 'gainst the gray sky behind the battlements
black of the donjon?
Why these strange groups in the street, at corners
where standeth a tavern,
Men from the mine and the field, from furnace,
the plough, and the woodland;
Sulky and furtive of glance, or stern and of confident aspect;

Peasants, who diffident talk to lean-looking fellows in broadcloth
Profuse of their cunning advice, hoarse whispered in private bar parlour—
Seasoned with fourpenny ale, and the incense of rankest tobacco.

'TIS that the Judge is to come—the Red Judge
—to hold the Assizes;
Liberty bringing to some—but to others surcease from life's labour—
Hard labour—delight of the good—awarding the bad to chastise them.
He comes to attribute restraint—and, haply, with that reformation—
For ordered revenge of the Law holdeth balm for the wound of the wronged one;
Yet causeth maleficents pain—yea, dolour impelling to virtue;
That virtue sufficing for joy in sense 'tis enough to deserve well.

So shall the best remain good, while the worst
become, possibly, better;
Each rascal receiving his due—the cell, or the
scourge, or the gallows;
Pleasant to righteousness' taste the pain a trans-
gressor must suffer;
None taking more than his share, yet each a fair
portion receiving.

HARK! the proud prancing of horse, tight-
reined to ensure caracolling,
Rumble of chariot-wheels, and blare of uncertain-
blown trumpets,
Winded by tight-buttoned knaves in waistcoats
for others commanded.
Mark, 'tis the progress in state of the strength of
the County High Sheriff.
Coated in scarlet he comes; side furnished with
sword, head with cocked hat;
Such as great Wellington wore for filling with
fear little Frenchmen,

As may be seen on the bronze that stands Piccadilly adorning.
Slow to the Station he wends, through strait serpentine streets of the Borough;
Waits there the train from the South—impatiently pacing the platform,
Until porters proclaim it arrives at Goodness-alone-can-tell-what-place.

SWIFT from the train there descends, with salaam to the Sheriff, the Marshal,
White waving wands indicating the carriage where conscious the Judge sits,
Attentive, 'twould seem, to the text of hastily-seized depositions—
Homer first furtively hidden, or Tully, or was it Catullus?
Hat in hand he advances, High Sheriff, low bowing—Sub-Sheriff yet lower;
Friendly yet formal salutes interchange now Justiciar and Shire Reeve;

Not cordial—convention demanding politeness
controlled by some rigour;
Judge representing the Crown—over-lord of the
subjected County;
These in the past feudal days not oftentimes aid-
ing each other;
This claiming more than were owed, and that
doing less than due service.

PRESENTED the Chaplain—arrayed in gown
and in hood academic—
Javelin-men shoulder their staves, and all move
away in procession
'Twixt lines of mere curious most, but some who
have come with a purpose
Here, with their bail, to observe what manner of
man is his Lordship.
Does he look stern—as a bust of Brutus, or limning
of Jeffreys;
Learned as Eldon in law, or humanist lettered
like Murray;

How may they guess, at a glance, does a man
come or merely a codex?

OUT to the gay yellow coach with armorial
bearings bedizened.

Coachman, proud waving his whip, timid touching
the tightly-reined horses.

Ponderous pounding their hoofs start these on
their fear-filling progress—

Rhythmical tossing of heads to murderous mea-
sure of footfalls.

DRAGGED to their haunches, they stand at
the Georgian, square, Judge's lodgings—

Builded of honest hard stone by builders not less,
it seems, honest;

Builded ere by-laws were framed by Councils
or rural or urban—

Formal yet friendly; a page of old Johnson—
derident, decorous.

THERE does his Lordship descend the steep
swaying steps of the carriage,
Unheeding the oft proffered arms of the Sheriff's
officious tall footmen.

First, in procession, to Court—to find there the
Clerk of Assizes,

Clerk of Indictments, and other Associates wearily
waiting;

Socii all of the Judge, since so the Commissions
declare them.

CLERK of Assize reads aloud the Commis-
sions, with frequent obeisance.

To deliver the gaol command these, and likewise
to hear and determine.

Precepts the High Sheriff produces, tight tied with
bright bunches of ribbon;

Wonders the while, worthy man, what so darkly
is hidden inside 'em—

Never of precept had heard—save inferior far to
example;

So did his grandmother teach in parable cunningly
chosen—

Passes them on to the Judge, and he to the Clerk
of Assizes.

NOW men may throng with their complaints to
Her Majesty's Justice in Eyre,
Come—as the custom has held since Henry Plan-
tagenet firstly
Established his Judges should ride round the
kingdom, rude remedies bearing;
Laws that are some of them writ in Statutes result
of the counsel
Of Burgess, and Knight of the Shire, with Sover-
eign reluctant consenting;
Customs more often; preserved, as 'twas said, in
the breasts of the Judges;
Recognized law of the land by all—did they own
it or till it—
Lord of the Manor, and tenant by copyhold, yeo-
man, and villein;

Land that each free man was bold to defend—were
 he lancer or bowman—
Glad when the banners were borne to Bayonne,
 to Agincourt, Créçy.
Careless whate'er were the cause so the leopards
 on fleur-de-lis trampled.
Rules a plain soldier might learn until written and
 construed by Churchmen;
Then few might read them aright, by lawyers
 commented, distorted;
Printed at length in a tongue e'en Normans were
 proudly forgetting,
As there grew out of the ground our glorious
 harvest of English;
Gold to be garnered by Gower, and Chaucer—by
 Shakespeare, and Milton.

SOON has the Sheriff withdrawn; the Mayor of
 the Borough preceding,
Aldermen filing behind, the sword and the mace
 borne before him—

Leaving the Judge to himself—to himself and his
lonely reflections,
Such as intrude when we sit in the dusk, where
the flickering fire-light
Maketh faint shadows that march round the room,
while the slow-dying embers
Take, as they fade, the pale form of familiar yet
half-forgot faces.

JUDGE, but not merely a Judge—though learned,
not lawyer entirely;
Orator, maker of laws, had he been—likewise
maker of verses—
Leader he formerly was of the Circuit he comes
now as Justice—
Leader admired and beloved—the friend of his
friends and the Muses—
Friend of humanity too—and mourner of one
Kosciusko,
With the nation he laboured to free until hope
bade farewell at his falling.

DOES his Lordship recall, as he turns, looking
down on the Square from his window,
That distant—aye, too remote—day when diffident,
greatly mistrusting,
First he arrived in that town, his new wig and
gown in the blue bag
He himself carried with pride, as marking him
one of the Counsel
Learned-in-law, yet unlearn'd in the way of the
world for the most part?
Sees he, in fancy, again, as he gazes across at the
Court-House,
While they troop forth in their robes, those friends
that he found on the Circuit?
Juniors too learned in law, and Leaders who never
could learn it;
Junior unskilful of speech, and Leader skilled only
in speaking;
Each of them playing his part—the complement
each of the other.
None but some quality lacks another may live by
possessing:

So is the balance preserved—so all work together
for order—
Rounding in circle complete—the globe turning
aye on its axis.

DOES his Lordship recall his first brief—un-
forgettable seemed it some short time—
First of the many forgot of his causes, the gained
like the lost ones;
Steps of the stairway to him, by which he has
mounted—a spiral,
Like to Da Vinci's at Blois, the saddened descend-
ent concealing.

ADVOCATES all of them were—companions
he found on the Circuit—
Fighting each, partly for self, more for client
who last had retained him;
Altruist no one indeed; mere egoist none of 'em
neither.

Hardly distinguishing which for the moment, or
Counsel, or Suitor,
Plaintiff, Defendant, Accused, or merely for one
of 'em Counsel;
Swordsmen of skill to the crowd; to each other
but comrades of Circuit.
Barristers—*bretteurs*—and yet friendly Phintias,
intimate Damon.
Walking and talking in groups—mere cliques to
the yet unadmitted—
Talking of letters or law—some few both of law
and of letters—
Westminster occupies some; for others New-
market sufficing.

“**D**EVILS” were some of them called—to
delving for others addicted;
Reading and noting the briefs of busy or lazier
Leaders;
Searching repellent Reports for more or less
apposite cases;

Trusting that some day themselves may live by
vicarious labour;
Moyling meanwhile, all content to be envied
occasion for moyling
By scholars no leader employs in digging for dust
defaced treasure.

WHERE be they now, those brave boys, erst-
while the delight of the Bar Mess—
Singers of songs, and players of cricket, and riders
of races;
Rowers in flimsiest craft, and riders in point-to-
point races?
Gone—for the most part aloft, as we trust; but,
alas, some gone under,
Wearied with waiting in vain for the briefs
nepotistic Attorneys
Gave to incompetent kin, or crass cousins of
railway directors.
Wearied have drifted away—despondent, or may
be courageous,

Where some new Colony called for a horse-tamer,
farmer, Chief Justice;
Else, have they gold-digging gone, 'neath the
vertical sun of the tropics,
Dreaming of Lalage yet—how, haply, a nugget
may win her?
Severn become, and Isis, more fair than was ever
Abana;
Dearer than Pharpar—beloved of the dweller by
fabled Damascus.
Some to the Senate aspired, attained it; are there
unremembered;
Merged in the masses compelled by the Whips in
this lobby or that one;
Helping to govern the world by making believe it
is governed;
Losing their labour indeed, yet loving to labour
and lose it.

YET some—with more labour, or luck—or, may
be, deserving—have risen,

Aye, even to Cabinet rank, and the hard attained
heights of the Peerage.

Lost are they there in the clouds that settle on
law-giving Sinai,

Rarely revealed but to such as are called up to
fearfully argue

Appeals at the foot of the throne, or precipitous
side of the Woolsack.

SLUMBER, my Lord, as they troop through the
ivory gate and go past you,

Dim, while you doze in your chair drawn near to
the fire by your Marshal,

Opposite sitting half-hid, in his silvery, sad cigar-
ette smoke.

Dreaming, perchance, too, is he, though the past
with no vision may vex him—

Nothing he knows to regret, unless that he have
not the future—

Careless of all that is gone; of the present day,
likewise, regardless.

None holds the thing that he has for the best ; be
he Judge, be he Marshal.

Only to Horace, perhaps, or to Omar Khayyam,
were it given

To taste of each fruit early ripe, nor mourn them
decayed with the season.

DARKNESS descends on the town; Deep
slumber has seized and is holding
All in the Lodging—aye, all—in Barracks, Asylum,
and Prison.

None, till the dawn, is more learn'd nor saner nor
better than other;

Colour is not in the night; neither virtue nor vice
in the sleeper.

MORNING is here; with the sun, in com-
petitive splendour, the Sheriff—
Magnates municipal march, embarrassed in
mazarine raiment,

By alley and lane to the Church—to the porch
where attendeth the Parson.
Last comes the Judge by himself—now command-
ing, now pleading, the organ
Alternating “God save the Queen” with resonant,
reverent music.

ALL in the chill Norman nave have knelt,
and have made full confession;
As is the habit of such as conceive they have done
little evil;
Saints smiling solemnly down from capital,
corbel, and window;
Down on the effigies prone of Abbot, Crusader,
and Baron,
Knights in their hauberk and helm, by ladies in
mantle and wimple,
Painted with patches of gold, of azure, of vert,
and vermillion,
Cast by the sun as he moves o’er the panes of
armorial crystal.

THE chaplain has *à propos* preached, improving
the passing occasion
With parallel pointedly drawn, allusive of grander
Assizes.
Glanced then at Judges of old; and, seeking a
fancied resemblance
Between some of those and the present my Lord,
spake of Seneca's brother,
Gallio—so ill understood by the casual reader
of Scripture—
Gallio, philosopher, wit, and tolerant hearer of
teaching;
Damned by the zealots, for that he condemned
not the Gentiles' Apostle;
Smiling, as Saul might to Paul, when bigots their
Rabbi belaboured;
Caring for none of those things that the litigant,
losing, may utter;
Heedless of all except truth, and of keeping the
lists for the tourney.

WIDE stand the doors of the Court—cometh
juryman, witness, and suitor,
Disputing with idlers for place where pickpocket
jostles policeman.
Enters the Judge to the blast of trumpets that
blare at his coming;
Stately in full-bottomed wig, majestic in scarlet
and ermine.
Knights and Esquires all have sworn, each taking
his oath from the Marshal—
That they will duly present all contemnners of law
in the County
Who shall be known unto them; and that without
hatred or malice;
Nor must they leave unrepresented none others
from fear or affection.
Gravely they list to the charge that his Lordship
more solemn pronounces;
Truisms oft-times retold, all relating to sin and
its wages;
High wages, too, it would seem, and how punctual
paid to the toiler—

Even the wages of death for such as have fully
deserved it.
Sayings that Solomon's self might have spoken, or
praised had he heard them,
Adorning a stately discourse designed to instruct
the Grand Jury
How they should deal with the bills of indictment
their pleasure awaiting.
Showed he the wisdom of doing the good, and
avoiding the evil;
Prison, privation, the scourge, and — ultimate
reason—the gallows.
Pointed to statute, late passed in order to Pro-
vidence aiding,
Lest punishment condign fall least upon such as
may merit it chiefly;
Quoted an apt apothegm—as he said, from some
Paduan doctor—
How Justice looks likest Divine when most it is
seasoned with mercy.
Pardon all need, he averred, be their place on the
Bench or the Scaffold—

Merciful judging of all—aye, even least merciful
Judges—

Our Kings, when they come to be crowned, swear-
ing they will do justice in mercy.

CLAIMED he Society's self is condemned for
some crime we would punish,
Taking small thought of the laws, the natural
laws, that impel some
To violate such as men make with assurance, but
less understanding.
Ah, were our students of men half as learn'd as
our students of monkeys,
Class were brought nearer to class, yet all from
the beast were remoter;
Man more regardful of men, the worst not so far
from the best ones:—
Justice;—were all to be judged . . . as, certainly,
soon we all shall be . . .

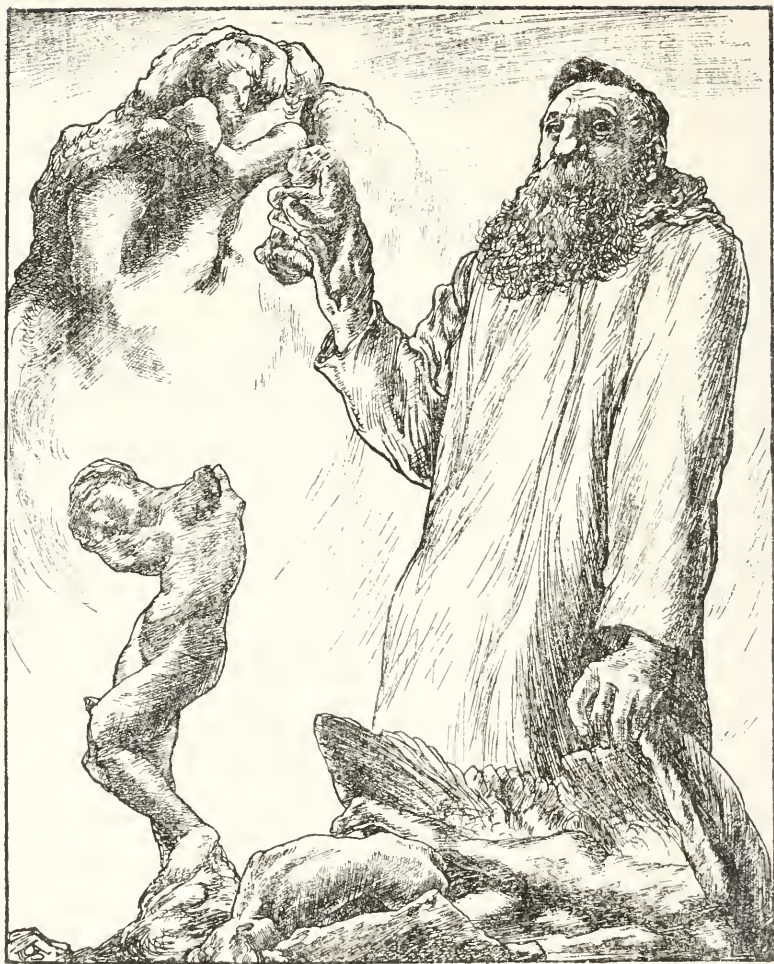
PALLID he turned as the bust that, frigid, of
Pentelic marble,
Fixes forever his face ere he fainted, and fell, and
lay silent—
Evermore silent they saw that covered his face
from the gazer.

* * * * *

Gone to its God was the soul—and borne back a
corpse to the Lodgings—
Naked the one as it came; robed the rest in the
scarlet and ermine.



SONNETS



TO AUGUSTE RODIN



ODIN; whose eye beholds in clay
concealed

The prisoned spirits; whose con-
trolling hand

Frees them, to live, and leave the
phantoms' land;

Arresting shapes, enshrouded, half revealed;
While forms step forth, to whom thou hast ap-
pealed,

In heavenly beauty, or rude strength, and stand
As struck with death in birth at thy command—
To breathless bronze or pallid stone congealed.

Poet and sculptor; like to him who wrought
In fair Firenze—but that thou dost write
No sonnet, save in marble, and no rime
Beyond sad harmonies thou may'st have caught,
With ear to earth, when sounds the dirge of
night,
And all the planets move to mark the time.

TO COQUELIN



STUDENT of man—yet closer of
Molière—
How various is thy instinct, and
thine art,
That clothes thy mind with trap-
pings of each part;
The gesture cadenced to some stately air
Of Court or Camp, when France disdained to share
Empire in arms or letters, but apart—
Gallant yet grave, coquette of candid heart—
Was all the world's loved mistress and despair.

Oft come, and late prolong thy welcome stay—
'Tis thy return that doth the year renew;
Approaching now in guise of valet vain;
Pretentious burgher; now the Gascon gay,
Jongleur and swordsman—at all points so true,
We marvel what thou art, and when dost feign.

AT PONT-AUX-DAMES



HIS wreath for Coquelin; and alike
for all

We here inter—since they and he
were one.

Now Cyrano's sidereal course is
run;

O'er Figaro strange tragic shadows fall;
Fair Comedy lies hid beneath this pall;
Jourdain's school-day of puzzled prose is done;
And torn the tissue subtle Scapin spun;
No Chantecler shall gladden tristful Gaul.

More than these shades the simple friend I
mourn—

Whose heart first fired did France consent to
crime—

The sprightly spirit, and discerning mind
Apt for affairs, yet to the fray foresworn.

These—though they naught bequeath to after-
time—

Have here sure refuge that himself designed.

January, 1909.

TO GENERAL PICQUART

ON HIS APPOINTMENT AS MINISTER FOR WAR



OLDIER, and friend of France;
who, finding wrong
By priest and soldier wrought in
Justice' name,
While forgers wrote and signed
their country's shame—

Didst lonely front the furious bigot throng,
And stand across the prostrate 'gainst the strong,
Calling for aid, till from the darkness came
The flash *J'accuse* that kindled reason's flame;
Picquart; to thee does this high place belong.

Marshal the force of France; for thou hast served—
Beyond all other served—the Nation well,
In raising truth command in chief to take,
When Dreyfus suffered anguish undeserved
Where the hot floods faint round the Isle of Hell,
And thou wast exiled for thy valour's sake.

December, 1906.

ON AN UNFINISHED PICTURE



IMPERFECT picture, that dost
symbolise

Two souls' converging course ar-
rested here;

Statesman, who first didst catch
with conscious ear

Faint calls for union, and didst aid the rise
Of the new spirit, that awakened cries

In all the Britains, "Gather; have no fear
To ring your realm with steel; then, without
peer,

Regard the distance where new nations rise."
Young painter; who ere thy few days were sped—

Thy title genius, and Sir Joshua's line—

Compelled reluctant hands a wreath to twine,
Meet for the highest and predestined head,

No full reward before the end was thine.—

And he beholds his troops by other captains led.

TO VISCOUNT MILNER



MILNER, most steadfast guardian of
the State,
Who 'gainst her foes didst battle
and prevail—
Subduing all who would our rights
assail;

Slow turning to respect their scornful hate—
Attend no honour; such as would await
Thee now, were English Roman. What avail
This service, if one moment thou didst fail
Nor deign to blame a servant in debate.

Thy crime is that our country thou couldst save,
When they defamed her that do now accuse
Thy conduct—all too high above their strife
For paltry place, ere yet th' oblivious grave
Shall hide their dust who poisoned phrase abuse
To dull the envied splendour of thy life.

June, 1906.

ON J. MCNEILL WHISTLER



THOU much mistaking, more mis-
understood,
Limner of views unseen save in
the mind;
Instant the subject, to th' objective
blind;

Not holding aught as we behold it good;
Thy soul enshrouding, as beneath a hood
Drawn o'er the face; though fain to love thy
kind,

Glad of a foe, where friends are few to find,
Made bold by fear that all advance withstood.

A symphony, of discords sweet confused;
Of notes that on thy palette struck became
Pale tints, whose tone thou only couldst dis-
cern;

For which distinction was thy gift abused.

Now far aloft, secure in constant fame,
All see thee shine, pale star, in Time's nocturne.

TO E. H. P., K.C.



MUSARUM CULTOR—and of roses
eke—

Reclined within thy garden's
studied grounds,
Beside the dial thy wise rime
surrounds—

Ambrosial trees, and hybrid's antic freak
Engage thine eye—fatigued by crabbed Greek—
Or call thee forth to where the myrtle bounds
The lawn—yet not excludes the cry of hounds,
Where the shy otter lurks by Boldre creek.

Lost here that urban air—not all urbane—
That marks the London lover when we meet
In modish Park, or Temple's learned Lane—
Infrequent trod by thy returning feet—
Or when the goblet to thy toast we drain,
And *seria ludo* at thy hest repeat.

IN AN ARMOURY



TERN panoply. Whose limbs this
shell have filled;

What souls from out the vacant
visor gazed?

When shattered spears across that
breastplate grazed,

Whose blood adown this rended mail was
spilled?

Did Crillon grasp that blade, when trumpets
shrilled,

And Henry's helm above the battle blazed?

Perchance it sped, by traitorous Jarnac raised,

The caitiff *coup* Châteigneraie that killed.

Or was your casque from generous Sidney borne
To that poor soldier, stretched on Zutphen's field,
Who dying found his latest foe his friend?

We know not whom that martel made to mourn;
Whose blazon erst displayed this battered shield;
Natheless, not here may wrong nor honour end.

AT CHRISTIE'S



YOUNG lady, with a linnet in a cage'';

Where was thy home, and what thy little name,

Ere yet such strangers both to thee became

As these, who here—thy venal suitors—rage,
And round thee rude, ignoble conflict wage
For ashes pale—long fled the blushing flame
That to thy cheek, as Romney touched it, came,
Whenas thy charms did every Muse engage.

Thy world admitted no such insolent crowd
As here may stare into thy maiden eyes,
May laud thee to thy very face aloud,
Make of thy smile in this mean mart the prize;
Yet gain not thee—far folded in thy shroud—
All else the diamond or the dollar buys.

DEI DONUM



FIELDS that my forebears tilled,
and later lost;
Land of the Border—hard to win
or keep—
Where Northern tribesmen, born
to war, now sleep
'Neath the gray cairn—unnamed, together
tossed—

Beside the burn they oft as reivers crossed,
By turn to drive the Scots or English sheep—
Or the sparse grain they had not sowed to reap—
Esteeming oatmeal at the lives it cost.

How far, how foreign to myself, they stand—
The laboured glebe; the home, with barn and byre;
Hard by the kirk where Covenant was ta'en—

Unlearned to lisp the language of the land;
The Border march stirs yet some smouldering
fire,
While the Scots blood may fill one English vein.

AT RUFUS STONE



If forest story mark the glade aright
Where careless children deck yon
weather'd stone,
There has the hunter's murderous
arrow flown,
Urged from the bow of one un-
faithful knight,
Whom timid chroniclers too ill requite
Pretending that fell stroke not all his own—
Naught might for kingly blood outpoured atone—
And Tyrrel patriot in his own despite.

Or was it blind mischance—not peerless crime—
That drave the shaft through Rufus' hardened
heart;
Some senseless stem that helped the archer's
aim,
When else had sped in vain the destined dart—
As oft it chance that we proclaim sublime
Some deed deserving neither laud nor blame?



ON A TUMULUS



Ye, who have lain through ages long
beneath
This hillock; on whose top the
rangers stand,
To mark the deer that roam this
forest land

Of wood, and marsh, and purple spread of heath,
Where rusty bracken lays a withering wreath
Above your heads—low pillowed in the sand—
Continued are ye in this sylvan band,
To whom your woodland lore ye did bequeath.

Though conquering races—vanquished in their
turn—

Pursuing o'er your grave, have gone their way,
Ye linger ever—here your cries resound
When the pack whimpers through the shuddering
fern,
While the view-halloo fills the autumn day,
Or the sharp horn recalls the wandering hound.

OCCASIONAL VERSES

TO K. P.



Y dear K.—Many thanks for the fish—

He arrived in the pink of condition.

Alameunière, he'll make such a dish
As might serve for Lucullus' nutrition.

How gigantic your trout must have looked,
As he floundered and leapt in the Itchen;
What fortune he firmly was hooked—
Else he ne'er had appeared in our kitchen.

The cool grasses that wrapt him around;
Weren't they plucked by the pool you were
fishing?
Still they quiver, as though at the sound
Of the reel, and the line sharply swishing.

Here they bring the soft voice of the stream,
Sliding slow amidst lilies and sedges,
By cattle that drowsily dream
In the shade of green hayricks and hedges.

Did you lure him with minnow or worm;
With a black, or a blue, or a gray fly;
Or did he—'tis still Easter Term—
Succumb to the wiles of a May-fly?

Little matter. A handsomer trout;
A browner, a brighter, or better;
Redder speckled from tail tip to snout,
Ne'er inspired one to rime in a letter.

IN A PRINT SHOP



STAMPE GALANTE. Is 't so you
name

This somewhat free and easy etch-
ing,

Of *mondain* Abbé, sprightly Dame,
And Cupid at his bowstring

stretching?

Monsieur, who leans the hand to kiss

Of *Madame*, at her toilette sitting.

Affection she affects to miss—

La mère, who bends intent on knitting.

“*L'Escarpolette*.” How indiscreet,

The French might say—we, English, shocking—
To swing, till slippers fly from feet,

In skirts that show such length of stocking.

“ *Le billet doux* ”—a *motif* trite—
All see the subtly hidden letter.
The ink, too, is a trifle light—
Before the *fleur*on it were better.

This coloured plate, by young *Le Prince*,
That shepherd, *Diane*’s nymphs alarming—
Where *Jaminet* improves *Lavreince*—
Beauvarlet, after *Boucher*—charming!

Carved *consoles*—bright with *bric-à-brac*—
The cartel clock, that hangs above them—
Marquises, in robes de *Cour*—*en sac*—
Un-English—yet I’ve learned to love them.

Gauloises? perchance—I cannot less
Admire these *boudoir* scenes—my fancy
Arrested not where Rakes progress,
Or Sikes kills, kicks, or kisses Nancy.

As *décor*, though I covet these;
My British home demands decorum.
There Landseer's pensive puppies please;
Or Turner's *Liber Studiorum*.

So close your *portefeuille* of proofs
By Debucourt, Desrais, and Chalon.—
I see the Tempter's cloven hoofs
Through silken shoes with courtly *talon*.

IN WINTER



HE clouds lour leaden, smeared
with red,
The wind is veering north,
I am not good King Wenceslaus;
So need not venture forth.

My chair I draw more near the hearth:
Then saunter round the rows
Of friends who never importune,
Nor ever turn to foes.

Though duck and woodcock, wearied, hide
About the frozen pond,
I'll take a folio from the shelf,
And have no thought beyond.

Now, would I *Johnson* hear, or *Burke*,
My hand I need but raise;
And they discourse—or *Goldsmith* hymns
A haunch of venison's praise.

I may, with *Spenser*, wander wide
Midst metaphor and trope;
With *Raleigh* sail, with *Milton* soar;
Or sit and sneer with *Pope*.

Would I, with *Napier*, view the fields,
And leaguered towns, of Spain,
Or list *Sir Walter* sing the feats
Of Borderland again?

Old *Froissart* calls me to the camp,
With blazoned banners gay
Of Duke, and Earl, who won in war
Lands long since lost at play.

With *Wordsworth* shall I watch the sheep
Go grazing o'er the lawn,
With *Hyde* survey the selfsame meads
When rebel swords were drawn?

Shall *Horace* teach me how to live,
Or *Bossuet* how to die;
Gross *Rabelais* point the path to hell;
à *Kempis* to the sky?

From *Gibbon's* peak shall I behold
The sinking sun of Rome;
Or seek in *Gray's* sequestered vale
The window lights of home?

La Rochefoucauld holds drops distilled;
Voltaire rich sparkling wines.
A charnel house those *Mémoires*, all,
Montaigne, *Golconda's* mines.

The day is mine.—I might essay
To parse some zigzag line
By *Browning* traced—*Ars longa*—No;
To-morrow mayn't be mine.

How hard the choice—where all allure—
Mid essays, tales, and rimes.
I read the titles; pull the bell;
And, “Stockley, bring *The Times*.”

AT DEVIZES



AST my window on the street
Go they, jogging to the meet;
Hounds and horses—Whips in
green,—
I, in ermine, peer unseen
Through my window on the street.

Hark! They draw the hanging covert,
'Mid the brake hounds push and hover,
Here in Court I catch their cry
Down the wind go fitfully.
There 's a fox in hanging covert.

Wasn't that the huntsman's holloa?
"For'ard, for'ard." Follow, follow,
Gay in coats of buff and blue.
Ah! the day when mine was new—
There, again, the horn—Hoick holloa!

They are racing up the vale,
Over down, and distant dale.
Though each fence be stiff and high,
Close the pack together lie;
Racing silent up the vale.

But the boys who years ago
Called the gladdest gallop slow—
Kept the closest to the pack—
At the gaps they're hanging back.
Not the boys of years ago.

Who be these that scamper by,
Fast, and faster as they fly—
Where are they that wont to guide
Such wild valour? They have died.
'Tis old Time that scampers by.

Yet I see young Worcester ride
By the former Worcester's side.
O'er the fallow and the grass,
Long the Beaufort Hunt shall pass;
Though the shadows with them ride!

THE BAYONET

AFTER PAUL DÉROULÈDE



HE German guns along the hill side
clung—
Wheatfields before them, thickets
dense behind.
About our prostrate ranks their
shells were flung;
When “forward” shrill our merry bugles sung;
And the gay Zouaves leapt out the foe to find.

“Comrades, no shot. Ye heard the Chief’s behest.
The thirsty bayonet aye sups alone.”
A round of grape applauds the sergeant’s jest.
“To earth; a curtesy to the coming guest.”
They rise who live in lines by mitraille mown.

Vainly the cannon hurl the rending shell
Round the red bonnets, ever onward borne.
Rushed the rear forward where our foremost fell;
Cheering came on; as might wild fiends from hell.
Bravely the poppies waved above the corn.

Ah, fights where falling is to rise indeed;
Wherein the vanquished cause the foe defeats!
Loud rings the clarion: they careless bleed;
Fresh wounds but firing for more valiant deed
The bravest who in arms a braver meets.

Now, see them strike, with bayonet red and blade
They thrust, cut, kill. . . . Ah, pity—how they die!
Whirled in the wild stampede, all undismayed;
Dancing the dreadful dance our bugles played;
Screaming the deathless Corps' mad battle cry.

Carried the battery! On the trampled field
To silence sad the martial tumult falls.
Number we ours who yet their weapons wield.
Alas, but nine the shrunken roll may yield.
Ten guns! What age such feat of arms recalls?

The sergeant, "Each a cannon! and one more!
Up limber. March—and laugh we by-and-bye."
Too few the horses; frantic driven sore;
Ten guns behind; the Captain on before.
" *En route*. Leave the troop as they lie."

Alone; black night along the plain drawn down—
Rearward, a clatter—Uhlans who retreat.
A furlong on, dim lights foretell the town.
Dark ramparts round the little fortress frown;
Within our camp fires flare in square and street.

"Ho, comrade cooks! Our supper—praise the
Fates!

Quick trot; the guns. The *geste* repays our pain."
He spurs ahead to where the picket waits.

"Guns of the Zouaves! Ten cannon! Wide the
gates!"

"*Wer'st da!*" the challenge. . . . Germans! What,
again!

MARGINAL MEMORANDA

COMMUNIS ERROR FACIT JUS



O Code to Britons gave a right.
They reasoned wrong; then saw
Their common error's regal might,
And hailed it common law.

DOMUS SUA CUIQUE EST TUTISSIMUM
REFUGIUM



ALTHOUGH the Bailiff's men must
wait outside—
Nor break the outer door and enter
through—
The deadliest foes within the
home abide,

Or with ourselves come *bras dessus dessous*.

QUI PRIOR EST TEMPORE POTIOR
EST JURE



RUE of possession; still a poor
defence

To him who, angered, strikes the
earlier blow.

Invert the maxim to conserve the
sense,

And he prevails who first a bruise shall show.

NECESSITAS NON HABET LEGES



ARE the complaint in that labor-
ious age

When little satisfied the frugal
thief;

Content to win a barely living
wage,

Nor to his parish turn for out-relief.

Law now rules all; and these of right demand

For every want reward, as legal due;

Need holds by Law—because as Statutes stand

Le nécessaire veut dire le superflu.

OF RIVERAIN RIGHTS



QUI prend, sans permis, un poisson
D'autrui, de prison est-il digne?
Oui certes; l'eau doit être sa boisson—
Il paraît qu'il a péché, à la ligne.

NULLUM QUOD EST INCONVENIENS
EST LICITUM



MUCH healing unguent holds this
unctuous phrase
For all wrong-doers, doomed
through pain to pay:
Perceiving convicts lawful prisons
praise,
And longer long within their walls to stay.

A PROVERB

Chi è avezzo a dir bugie, non crede a nessuno.



HE truth who flouts shall in the end
This recompense receive;
To gain no credit, trust no friend;
Nor yet himself believe.

SUMMUM JUS SUMMA INJURIA



HEN learned men of law contend,
In weary wordy strife,
They do but prove black-letter
kills;
The spirit giveth life.

EXPERTO CREDE

“BELIEVE no Expert,” say the cynic
Bar,
Yet how unjust—who all alike
deride.
This swears white black; but
straightway—*haud impar*—
An equal sage approves the candid side.

CUJUS EST SOLUM EJUS EST USQUE
AD COELUM



DELUSIVE maxim! Hardly Heaven
they hold
Whose lands in fee to central Hell
descend.
Though from the soil its lords the
stars behold,
With the thick air extremest titles end.



JUDICANDUM EST LEGIBUS, NON
EXEMPLIS



N principles—law's soul—each case
decide ;

Nor delve for skeletons that seem
the same.

Precisely like, did mouldy books
provide,

Decayed it were, and changed in all but name.

ALLEGANS CONTRARIA NON EST
AUDIENDUS



WOULD I enforce this golden line,
When certain Counsel rise,
Ere midnight might I hope to
dine,
And close this dull Assize.

LE PÉCHEUR DÉVOT



U diable tenir une chandelle,
L'Eglise condamne, comme grave
péché.
Pour que l'offense ne soit mortelle,
J'en offre de mauvaise qualité.

NOTES

In a form more imperfect, as I hope, the verses called "On the Oxford Circuit" appeared in "The Cornhill Magazine." A few of the other verses have also been published before—though not as now given.

As to these my thanks are due to the Editors and Proprietors of "The Cornhill Magazine," "The National Review," and "The Westminster Gazette" for permission to republish them.

ON THE OXFORD CIRCUIT

On 13th March, 1854, Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd, a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, died whilst delivering his charge to the Grand Jury at Stafford on the Oxford Circuit, of which he had been Leader. He is commemorated by a monument erected by the Barristers of the Oxford Circuit in the Assize Court where he expired.

ON AN UNFINISHED PICTURE

The sonnet on an unfinished picture has reference to the painting of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., by the late Charles Furse, A.R.A.—a kinsman of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

TO COQUELIN

Constant Coquelin—once of the *Comédie Française*—died suddenly, 27th January, 1909, when studying his part in “Chantecler,” a play written for him by M. Rostand, in the retreat for old actors which he had founded at Pont-aux-Dames, and there he was buried. He was one of the earliest to sustain the innocence of Captain Dreyfus.

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